

Testimony of James W. Little, GAE Committee, March 14, 2016

Re: S.J. 36, Resolution Proposing An Amendment to the Constitution of the State to Protect Certain Property Held or Controlled by the State for Conservation, Recreation, Open Space or Agricultural Purposes

My name is James Little and I am a Hebron resident. I am writing in support of S. J. 36. I believe we need a Constitutional Amendment to protect state lands from being transferred, sold or given away without adequate public knowledge and input. The current process is subject to abuse, which was demonstrated a few years ago by the notorious Haddam land swap deal. We need a better process to analyze and discuss any transfer, sales or swap of state owned land.

The land, forests and parks the state owns are important to our quality of life and are an underappreciated economic asset. Connecticut has is unique in being both a densely populated state and a heavily forested state. Our forests, parks and trails are a beautiful and productive legacy left by those who came before us. These recreation and comforting assets were not only bought by the State but were in a surprising number of times were gifts to the state. We need to be good stewards.

I am an active hiker and runner on greenways, in state parks and forests. This is a common sense proposal that I hope will be quickly implemented.